DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 790 SP 039 248

AUTHOR	Santoro, Ninetta
TITLE	Cultural Diversity in the Teaching Profession: A Case Study.
PUB DATE	2000-04-00
NOTE	14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Differences; *Diversity (Faculty); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *Racial Bias; Racial Discrimination; Secondary Education; Secondary School Teachers; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	Australia

ABSTRACT

A two-part study examined the gap in Australian research about teachers of different ethnic groups. The first part of the study examined demographics of the population of diverse secondary teachers who work in government secondary schools and are born overseas, educated overseas, and are non-native speakers of English. The information comes from a survey of 308 government secondary schools. The second part of the study was a qualitative case study of eight teachers from Victoria who completed interviews that investigated the nature of their teaching experiences. Results suggest that greater numbers of diverse teachers must be recruited into the teaching profession. Teachers felt marginalized and invisible as professionals. They often felt that their expectations and views about teaching were out of step with those of their colleagues, and this helped define their difference. The teachers felt singled out for redundancy and believed their authority was undermined in front of colleagues and students. Many encountered blatant racism from colleagues, administrators, and students. Teacher education must provide opportunities for diverse teachers to develop the skills they require to make valuable contributions to education and the confidence to adopt prominent roles within their schools. (Contains 22 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Cultural Diversity in the Teaching Profession: A Case Study

Paper presented to American Educational Research Association Conference
New Orleans
April 2000

Ninetta Santoro
nsantoro@deakin.edu.au

N. Santoro

ED 441 790

Introduction

Australia is one of the most multicultural societies in the world. Our indigenous population has a number of distinct languages and cultures and we also have a long history of immigration and resettlement of people from many parts of the world. Current Australian government census figures state that nearly one quarter of the resident population was born overseas and approximately 64% of all immigrants to Australia originate from a non-English speaking country. In excess of 200 countries have been named by immigrants as countries of birth in the most current census (1999 National Multicultural Advisory Council). However, despite this diversity, the Australian teaching profession is overwhelmingly monocultural monolingual and Anglo-Australian. A demographic study of 308 government secondary schools in the Australian state of Victoria (Santoro, Reid and Kamler forthcoming) has found that only 2% of teachers are bi-cultural, bilingual and born overseas, even though Victoria has one of the highest rates in Australia of settlement of immigrants from non-English speaking countries. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are even fewer indigenous teachers.

This lack of diversity in the teaching profession is problematic on a number of accounts. Firstly, while numbers of government reports in recent years espouse rhetoric about the importance of incorporating multicultural and antiracist education strategies into school curricula, few students have actually been taught by non-white or non Anglo-Australian teachers. Government policies have failed to address the need the ensure that greater numbers of teachers of ethnic difference are recruited into Australian schools. One of the most recent government reports, 'Australian Multiculturalism For a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness (National Multicultural Advisory Council 1999) states

> One of the most important roles of educators is to develop the next generation of 'citizens' and leaders. This is, itself, a leadership role. Given that the cultural diversity of Australia's students mirrors that of the general population, it is incumbent on educators at all levels and in all sectors to help prepare young Australians to live and work harmoniously as productive members of Australia's diverse community (p.60).

While few would disagree with this sentiment, the report does not address the need to ensure that some of the educators responsible for communicating 'the message of inclusiveness' (1999, p.60) are themselves, members of ethnic minorities.

Secondly, despite the inclusion of antiracist education into school curriculum and the implementation of multicultural policies, teachers who are members of dominant white discourses are often unaware of the ways in which the racism they attempt to teach against is present within their own localised contexts. According to Rizvi, relatively low numbers of bi-cultural, bi-lingual overseas born teachers in Australian schools is one of the reasons teachers often fail to "recognise the role schools play in the perpetuation of racism" (Rizvi, 1992, p.73).

Teacher ethnicity has been a focus in research in North American and British contexts for many years (Zimpher & Ashburn, 1992, Jones et al. 1997, Cochrane-Smith 1997, Rakhit 1998) but surprisingly, here in Australia, there has been little research that examines the nature of the professional experiences of teachers of ethnic difference who *are* in the system, albeit in small numbers - their presence remains largely 'invisible'. This lack of attention 'effectively silences the voices of those who are constructed as culturally different' (Rizvi 1997 p. 94).

As Troyna and Rizvi note:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP039248

> ...the failure to view the current representations of teaching as racially constituted is not only empirically impoverished, insofar as it turns a blind eye to the diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial mix of the teaching profession, but [...] it is also illustrative of what Iris Marion Young (1990) calls, somewhat provocatively, 'cultural imperialism'. This consists 'in a group's being invisible at the same time that it is marked out and stereotyped' (1997, p. 263).

In recent years there has been a small increase in the numbers of teachers of ethnic difference entering teacher education courses and then the teaching profession. Government policies on teaching Languages Other Than English (LOTE), have created a demand for teachers who can speak and teach Asian languages in particular (Directorate of School Education, 1993) and in many cases, native speakers of Asian languages most readily meet the language proficiency requirements for entry to LOTE teacher education courses. As the numbers of bi-cultural, bi-lingual overseas born teachers graduating from teacher education courses continue to increase to meet the demand for LOTE teachers, the need to investigate and make visible the experiences of this particular group of teachers is made all the more urgent.

This paper reports on a study which attempts to redress the gap in Australian research about teachers of ethnic difference. The first of the two part study is a demographic study of the population of secondary teachers of ethnic difference who work in government secondary schools and are overseas born, have completed at least secondary education overseas and are non-native speakers of English. The information collected from a survey of 308 government secondary schools serves as a mapping function and to make visible the diversity, location and characteristics of overseas born teachers (Santoro, Reid and Kamler forthcoming).

The second part of the study is a qualitative case study of eight teachers from rural, regional city and metropolitan areas of the state of Victoria, male and female, both currently and formerly employed with whom in-depth interviews were conducted to investigate the nature of their teaching experiences. At the time of data collection, two teachers from each geographical area were currently working and two (both from the metropolitan area), had resigned from the teaching profession (Kamler, Reid and Santoro 1998).

In this paper, I am interested in exploring a particular facet of the teachers' experiences, that is, the ways in which they are affectivity 'silenced' within the discourses of Australian secondary schooling and some of the ways in which they negotiate and resist this positioning. I conclude with a discussion of the implications for teacher education.

Research methodology: telling the teachers' stories.

The search for a way to tell the teachers' stories has been influenced by an interest in narrative methods of research, in particular, the work of Richardson (1997) and Thomson (1998). Richardson (1992) developed the technique of creating poems from transcripts, as part of her solution to what she calls "postmodern issues regarding the nature of the 'data', the interview as an interactional event, the representation of lives, and the distribution of sociological knowledge" (1997, p.140). She argues that the poetic form of data representation

> plays with connotative structures and literary devices to convey meaning, commends itself to multiple and open readings in ways that straight sociological prose does not. The poetic form of representation, therefore, has a greater likelihood of engaging readers in reflexive analyses of their own interpretive labors of my interpretive labors of [the interviewee's] interpretive labors (Richardson in Kumashiro 1999, p.495).

Kumashiro (1999) also draws on the poststructuralist work of Richardson and others such as Britzman (1995) and Fine (1994) to explore different ways of representing and discussing the words of his research participants. He argues that the traditional use of block quotations and the script form of interview transcripts allows (and encourages) the *assumption* that what is presented:

> (1) conveys to the reader what the participants were *really* saying, and (2) allows the reader to verify the validity of the researcher's interpretation of and claims about what the participants were really saying (1999, pp. 494-495).

Neither of these assumptions is necessarily true of course and he prefers to call attention to the fact that the transcript is *already* a representation of experience, rather than 'truth', and that it is produced by the researcher, rather than simply 'found'. He also creates poems, claiming that 'poetry's closer resemblance to (oral) speech makes it a more useful vehicle for capturing a speaker's speech and reproducing his or her power to move the listener' (1999 p. 495).

Thompson describes the process of constructing transcript poems as:

> a confronting move, it pares down, hones what has been captured on tape to a narrative that tells both emotionally and intellectually. It creates a stand alone text from transcript rather than encasing the transcript extracts in commentary. It presents a story rather than having the story told. It does not present truth, but aims to re-present truthfulness. This approach has been labeled invalid, subjective trivial, and un-academic because it challenges the conventional norms of sociological selection and presentation. Yet all data collection is a process managed and manipulated by the researcher and all research texts are constructed through writing and reading. The method draws attention to the acts of the researcher in manipulating and selecting and makes them visible, un-natural, needing to be defended and explained (Thomson 1998, p.10).

In building on earlier analyses of the interview data obtained from work the case study participants(Kamler, Santoro and Reid 1998), I have created poems for each of the eight teachers. The data presented in this paper has been taken from those transcript poems. The poems use the interviewees' exact words and in following Kumashiro (1999) present them in stanzas, each one an 'abridged version of the interview (i.e. what would otherwise be a block quotation but without the ellipses) (p. 496).

Each individual semi-structured interview with the teachers lasted about one hour and was audiotaped and transcribed in full. Questions about their perceptions of education and schooling in Australia, achievements and challenges in their classrooms practices and relationships with colleagues and students were intended as an invitation for the teachers to talk about their professional lives in their respective schools. The extent to which their professional lives impacted on their personal lives, was also of some significance.

I have searched the interview transcriptions for examples of overt and covert racism, notions of invisibility and hypervisibility and the teachers' responses to these positionings. The phrases have been cut and pasted, never changing the words or the integrity of the 'message' as I understand it. Each of the poems contains *only* the 'voice' of the teacher without the interviewer's interruptions, pointers, or queries. I experimented with line breaks and pauses in order to recapture points of emphasis and the sense of sadness and despair so pervasive in the interviews, as well as the successes and pleasures of other professional experiences. Through the organisation of the data display of the 'best' words of the interview into stanzas in what is regarded as the 'best order', I am able to present my response to the stories which the research participants have shared.

The teachers.

Elizabeth is in her early fifties, born in Hong Kong and a teacher of home economics and Mandarin. She has been in Australia for over thirty years, having first come here as a tertiary student. She currently teaches at a metropolitan secondary school where she has worked for three years.

Marie is in her early fifties and is a teacher of French in a Victorian regional city secondary school. She is Lebanese born and was a teacher in Lebanon for fifteen years prior to immigrating to Australia. She has been teaching in Australian schools for six years.

Yoshi, is twenty-seven, Japanese born and has lived in Australia for three years. He completed a post-graduate teacher education course just over a year ago and is in his second year of teaching Japanese language in a rural secondary school.

Shanti is fifty-two, and a teacher of science and mathematics in a rural school where she has worked for fifteen years. She immigrated from Sri Lanka via England in 1983. She completed her teacher education degree in London where she also taught for a short period of time.

Tung is in his twenty-five, Chinese born and has taught Chinese language in a Victorian regional city secondary school for three years. He has been in Australia five years and completed a post graduate teacher education course shortly after having arrived.

Mohammad currently teaches Turkish language at an inner city school. He migrated to Australia twenty-three years ago and has been teaching for sixteen years, all of which he has spent at the same school. Prior to teaching , he was a journalist in Turkey.

George resigned from teaching after twenty-three years as a science and maths teacher to pursue business interests. He currently operates a take way food business. He immigrated to Australia from Egypt almost thirty years ago and worked as a research assistant in a large hospital prior to completing a post graduate teacher education course.

Noel is Indian born and was a chemist in India before coming to Australia twenty-five years ago and had taught science and maths in Australian schools for nineteen years prior to resigning from teaching two years ago for health reasons. As yet, has not moved into any other field of work.

Silencing teachers of ethnic difference.

The teachers of ethnic difference in this study are effectively silenced and constructed as invisible within schools in a number of ways, and to varying degrees, by blatant and overt racism from students, colleagues and parents as well as more insidious forms of covert racism which pervade many facets of their professional lives. They are frequently positioned as invisible by virtue of their teaching subjects. Most teachers of ethnic difference are teachers of LOTE (Santoro, Reid and Kamler, 1998 Santoro, Reid and Kamler, forthcoming). Since 1993, the study of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in primary and secondary schools has been targeted by education policy makers as a priority area. Due to increased demand for LOTE teachers, especially in the priority areas of Asian languages, it might be expected that teachers qualified to teach these subjects would be in powerful and secure positions within their schools. However, in reality, implementation of the prioritised LOTE programs in schools has been fraught with difficulties. Frequently, there are severe shortages in staffing, programs are given few timetable hours in an already 'crowded' curriculum and there is often lack of continuity between primary programs and secondary programs. Despite the rhetoric of policy makers about the importance of LOTE study in the drive for a multilingual society, it is seen by many members of school communities as irrelevant to the needs of students and is effectively marginalised within school curriculum. Increased funding for language programs was also introduced at a time when there were cutbacks in general funding for education in Victoria. Not surprisingly, some of the case study teachers spoke of the resentment expressed by colleagues in staff rooms about the prioritising of LOTE programs over other programs. These sentiments reflect concern for jobs in 'hard times' and echoes Rong and Preissle's observations that '[i]mmigrant minority teachers are more likely to be convenient scapegoats in political and economic crisis when nativist feelings are high'(1997, p. 282).

The case study participants in this study who are LOTE teachers are challenged almost on a daily basis to justify the value of language study to parents, students and colleagues. The following extracts from Yoshi's

and Tung's transcript poems highlight their frustration at the attitudes of their students to the study of language.

I just wonder why they took Japanese language.
They say "what's the point of doing this?"
"Why do we have the Japanese, the language and LOTE?"
"I'm not interested".
"I'm not going to Japan".
"I haven't got Japanese friends". (Yoshi)

The kids tell you openly that "I don't care".
That worries me a lot.
I mean, I don't mind if students are really slow and just don't get it,
that doesn't worry me.
I'm happy to explain again with them.
But when they tell me that "I don't care, I'm not going to try",
it drive you nuts.
You try your hardest, you go to excursions,
you go use the internet,
you try your hardest to get them motivated.
Then some tell you in your face "I don't care,
I don't like Chinese. (Tung)

Tung and Yoshi teach no subjects other than LOTE. Their identities as LOTE secondary teachers are inextricably linked with their ethnicity and sense of self in ways which are not the same for Anglo-Australian teachers of LOTE. In many cases, they view criticism of their teaching subject and criticism of them as the same thing and it is difficult for them to take the remarks as anything *other* than personal. In the following poem extract, Yoshi reports on a discussion he had with his students' parents.

Actually, some parents just say, "Oh.
Oh? You teaching Japanese?
Now look,
my son or my daughter doesn't like Japanese".

To me it's common sense.
I wouldn't say to teacher
"Look, my child doesn't like Japanese"
Because they
know I am Japanese.
To be honest
I feel a bit,
not a positive feeling,
just . .
it's really sad the situation. (Yoshi)

The marginalisation of the teachers' subjects within the school curriculum and their 'invisibility' and silencing as professionals has ironically repositioned the teachers as 'hypervisible'. Not surprisingly, they are constantly challenged by problems of class mangmanet and feel they are under the 'watchful gaze' of school administrators. In commenting about the students' classroom behaviour Yoshi says,

They are very very noisy, you know - everyday.
So I sort of yell at the students
"Be quiet or sit down".
But some just don't listen. -
I talked to them very seriously,
"look that comment is not funny, I feel very unhappy with that
so could you stop it please".
They still laughing.

They are so rude to me all the times
I kind of get used to it.
They turn up to my class without anything
without pencil without book absolutely anything.
Of course I don't like it. (Yoshi)

Similarly, Marie also speaks about the challenge made to her authority by students and recalls an incident in which students had hung condoms in the classroom prior to her arrival.

Condoms everywhere,
they hung them everywhere.
I felt within me, I'm going to faint.
I was shivering but I said to myself "calm down".
"Yes, good morning, how are you?"
"Good morning Madame".
They kept looking.
"Lets proceed with the lesson".
We started work, they kept looking up from their work,
why isn't she reacting?
Then I said "Oh, it's a little hot in this classroom". (Marie)

When Yoshi seeks advice from senior colleagues about issues of class management, he is effectively provided with little assistance. Their 'laissez-faire' approach might be regarded as condoning the students' behaviour and although their advice might be intended to put him at ease, it does little to eleviate his sense of frustration and helplessness.

When I have a problem in the classroom
I have to go to the year level coordinator.
I remember the first time the coordinator told me,
"don't worry, the parents don't care,
they don't have a good attitude to LOTE".
Even other staff told me that.
They said, "don't worry, they muck around,
they're not interested in LOTE".

I understand.
It's hard to control discipline in this area.
I don't want to talk this ways but …
If…
let's say,
if that was a *maths* class,
maybe, they do something.
I don't know –
maybe because it's LOTE?

I think there should be more school support.

That's the problem with our school,
we just write report after report after report…
because, our policy is just
forgive,
forgive,
forgive.

The teachers often feel their expectations and views about teaching are 'out-of-step' with those of their colleagues and that this too defines their difference, leads them to question their competence and effectively silences them from challenging the accepted practices of Australian schooling. In referring to his lack of contribution to professional discussions during meetings Yoshi says,

I am Japanese.
I still sometimes, let's say at a staff meeting or some
other areas,
I think I'm **really** Japanese.
I think sometimes we have to push a bit more the
students.
I think maybe,
it's maybe because I'm Japanese. (Yoshi)

Marie says,

The standard is low
No discipline at home,
no discipline at school, no discipline in the country so ...
it's a miracle Australia has survived.
I try to push the them,
If they can give eighty percent,
I expect eighty percent,
If they can give two percent,
I expect two percent.
But the standard is **very** low.

What can I do?

The case study teachers are also highly visible in Australian society. Current research on race and ethnicity is concerned with exploring whiteness as a colour and writers such as Mirza (1996), Gillborn (1996) and hooks (1990) speak of the ways in which people of colour are more consciously aware of their ethnicity than white people. Whiteness 'has long been the standard against which the Other is inferior, deviant, exotic or simply noteworthy' (Levine in Bonnett 1996, p.145-146). It is 'constructed as the norm, an unchanging and unproblematic location, a position from which all other identities come to be marked by their difference' (Bonnett 1996, p. 146). Yoshi talks about feeling conspicuous, his Asian appearance marks him as 'Other' and defines his culture more strongly against the dominant white Anglo-Australian culture of the rural town in which he lives and teaches.

First time I was in here I was from Sydney
and I felt the people were really conservative.
I mean, maybe I could..
Say, whenever I ... let's say, go to shopping
of course I'm Asian looking.
Some Asians were here but not many -
there's not many Asians
you feel people just staring at you.
Maybe people around here don't see city life –
relationship with other countries

Even the parents,
like ...
when I had the parent interviews,
the first time it was a bit strange.
Like
when I rung
and I mention my name,
it's really an unusual name.
Just ...
they stop,
they change tone.
So (not everyone, I'm talking about some)...
I'm ringing,
I say
"I've got a concern with your son or daughter's behaviour in the classroom".

And they ask my name
again,
I say it,
again.

Similarly, Shanti also feels 'othered' by virtue of her colour. In speaking of the difficulties she experienced in dealing with the principal of her school, who victimised her by singling her out for redundancy, undermining her authority in front of her colleagues and students, speaking aggressively and rudely to her and insisting on watching her teach without providing reasons, Shanti identifies herself as being doubly disadvantaged because of her colour *and* gender.

If you're a coloured person,
you don't know much about anything,
you're following them.
I am a woman and top of it all,
I'm a coloured woman.
He just wouldn't listen to me.

The teachers are also made 'hypervisible' by their non-native English speaker status and their positioning 'outside' the discourses of Australian English.

Some kids didn't listen me,
didn't listen,
didn't stop.
Maybe, my language.
Maybe I am the migrant and they didn't listen.
Say "this is my country. He can't speak English". (Mohammad)

Some are very nasty especially the clever ones.
They say "we're studying Japanese, what about your English?"
I don't know, I feel, I take it more personally,
maybe I shouldn't.
They say "you've got a very funny accent and
do Japanese people talk like that all the time"? (Yoshi)

I try while teaching not to speak much English.
It has worked for me.
I never say "take your shoes" because the way I pronounce it
they would take it like something else and they would laugh.
I don't say "sit down" because if you happen to mispronounce it,
we have a laughter everywhere. (Marie)

If they haven't done their homework
they would still give a lot of silly reasons
or put the blame back onto you.
It turns out that it is your fault
because you cannot express yourself,
because you are foreign, right.
That's why they do not understand you.
Like some parents, if you let them know that the students have not done their work
they will say "oh, probably it's you,
you did not get the message through properly". (Elizabeth)

George, a former teacher speaks frequently of being overlooked for promotion to responsibility in his school and feels under constant threat of redundancy. He attributes this to the racist attitudes of one particular senior administrator in the school, "I know that he hated my guts, he hated my ethnicity, that's why I didn't get shortlisted for anything and when it was time to put people in excess, it was always

migrants". For a period of time George's self confidence was undermined and it is only after several years away from the school that he is able to reflect on the affect of those experiences. The following extract from George's poem highlights the invisible/hypervisibility dichotomy shaping his experiences and shows the depth of his feelings of insecurity at being 'found out' and his incompetence "exposed".

It was tough,
very scary,
very nerve wracking.
I used to hate the time when I stood in front of the kids.
I used to write things on my hand to remember.
I used to shake like a leaf.
I had nightmares about teaching.

I was scared of my language,
scared that I would put something silly.
I wasn't sure that I would gain their support or not.
I wasn't sure whether they would crack jokes or laugh.

I was afraid of being exposed.

I was grateful I had a job.

I used to be the humble person who does the work for the others.
They had the ability to speak in public,
they had the ability to do things in public that I was afraid to do.

I used to hide.
I'd run away from meetings,
sit,
hide,
sit in a place where I didn't contribute at all.
Never move a motion,
never second a motion,
never vote with the minority.

I was afraid of being exposed.

I did the silent thing of writing a book.
You don't have to stand up and speak for a motion
So I wrote a book.
I though this would give me a quiet recognition,
make me equal to everyone.
But it did the opposite,
It put me above everyone.
The principal called a me a "very distinguished person".
It put me in a very awkward situation.
I was not ready for it...
not at all.

While the racist practices of the teachers' colleagues were generally covert or reflected in institutionalised racism, several teachers spoke about racist abuse from students, being called a "black bitch" or a "black bastard", and having their accent, mannerisms or ethnic characteristics mimicked. Elizabeth speaks of the students openly "ching-chonging", which, as she demonstrates during our interview, involves the students stretching the corners of their eyes to resemble 'Asian' eyes while moving their head slightly from side to side in a rocking motion. I am struck here by the blatant 'violence' of these acts, the open and blatant challenging by students of their teachers' authority, their re-construction of the relationship between teacher and students which normally sees the teachers as the holders of greater power.

However, I don't want to imply that all the teachers are without individual agency and are merely powerless victims of racist discourses. 'Discourses do not simply roll over everything in their paths. Rather

they are always contested and contestable' (Fiske in Ryan 1999, p12). Some of the case study teachers resist and contest the discourses of racism and refuse to be silenced – they make sure their voices are heard. As Ryan says,

> Racism is interconnected with gender, class, age (dis)ability, sexuality, religion, language, culture, nationality and so on, in a variety of interactive, interlocking, contradictory and mutually reinforcing modes. As a consequence the ways in which individuals can belong to a certain group and experience their position within that group will depend fundamentally on their relationships to other groupings. For example, an individual's class and gender positions will dictate in many respects how they experience racism (Ryan 1999, p.89).

Shanti, for example is a relatively affluent member of the rural community in which she lives and she has the confidence in a class position which has enabled her to claim the respect she believes she deserves. angry at the discrimination she has suffered in her school as a result of her difference, she calls in the teacher union to assist her fight the injustices that have become part of her professional life. She negotiates and work around the discourses of racism to make her marginality as a woman marked by ethnic difference, 'work for her' rather than against her in the classroom finding ways to maintain strong connections with her Sri Lankan heritage as a feature of her teaching. bell hooks speaks of marginality as often being "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes ones' capacity to resist. It offers the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternative new worlds..the space in the margin is a site of creativity and power..."(hooks 1990, p.150). It seems that over the years, Shanti has moved closer to the 'centre' in some ways, but the "space in the margin" is where she is positioned the most powerfully.

At school they know my standards.
Even if two students are kissing
they will move apart.
Well, I tell them in class
those are private things (I come from a culture where these things are private).
They respect that.
I like that.
I don't have to tell.
They know me.
If they get bored I just tell a story about Sri Lanka.
They will listen.
"Why can't we learn Tamil rather than German?" (Shanti).

Likewise, Marie constructs herself as an upper class member of the Lebanese community and seeks consolation in her belief that she is more cultured and better educated than her Australian colleagues and that her students comments are simply reflections of insularity and ignorance. In this way, she seems less affected by the racism she encounters in her work place.

Well in my days you finished your baccalaureate.
We were under the French mandate.
They left but the civilisation stayed.
The schools were French and the standard was extremely high.
With all modesty, I am a master of my subject.
I was lucky enough to studied in the Sorbonne in France.
The students make fun of my English.
They mimic my French accent behind my back.
But I say to them
"perhaps I should tell you I've been to the University of Sorbonne.
They just look.

However, of all the case study teachers still working within the system, Yoshi seemed to be the most negatively affected by discourses of racism. As a young and inexperienced teacher he is struggling with the usual challenges facing new teachers as well as coming to terms with an education system of which he has

limited understanding. He is culturally and professionally isolation in the rural town in which he lives - there are few Asians in the town, students and parents and colleagues see even less relevance in the study of Japanese than their city counterparts and he has little collegial support. In addition, he is single and without the family support upon which the other teachers relied. In many ways, he is powerless to contest the discourses of racism and the silences imposed upon him and is probably at risk of prematurely leaving the teaching profession.

Implications for Teacher Education

The findings of the case study suggest a number of implications for teacher education and teacher educators. Firstly, we need to acknowledge that we must recruit greater numbers of teachers of ethnic difference into the teaching profession. The goals of inclusivity targeted in government policies and reports on multiculturalism and multicultural education (Department of Education 1997, National Multicultural Advisory council 1999) may be more achievable if the teaching population more adequately reflected the multicultural make-up of Australian society. In working towards this aim, we must ensure that teacher education provides opportunities for teachers of ethnic difference to develop the skills they require to make valuable contributions to education as well as the confidence to adopt prominent roles within their schools. Importantly, we need to acknowledge that many teachers have taught in their countries of origin and that we need to value and accept their previous teaching experiences, skills and expectations. At the same time we need to be more self conscious about the taken-for-granted practices of Australian schooling so that we can adequately prepare teachers for a system which might be vastly different from that in which they have previously worked. Some overseas born teachers have never been in Australian schools prior to their first practicum. Their understandings of everyday practices in Australian schools may be limited. Teacher education courses often assume rather than make explicit this knowledge. Providing exactly the same teacher education as for student teachers who have been schooled in Australia may not be appropriate in many cases.

Secondly, we need to better understand the professional and cultural isolation overseas born teachers may experience in rural and/or small communities. Many teachers of ethnic difference take jobs outside the metropolitan area as LOTE teachers, are young, single and inexperienced (Santoro, Reid and Kamler, forthcoming) and may find themselves professionally as well as culturally isolated. We need to ensure the adequate preparation of these student teachers. They need to be resourceful and independent professionals who will often be working alone as the school's only LOTE teacher and without the support available to those teachers working in faculties with several colleagues. They need to develop effective class management strategies and motivational strategies for students who are in many instances, negative towards the study of foreign language and they need to be able to access appropriate professional development and support networks. Teacher educators need to develop greater understanding about the challenges facing their newly graduated teachers of ethnic difference and assume more of a role in providing ongoing support and guidance.

Finally, teacher education can not simply focus on developing effective teaching skills in overseas born student teachers. We need to look towards our teacher preparation programs as a way to broaden the cultural awareness of our 'mainstream' teacher education students. Teacher education is an important site for the development of more aware and sensitive understandings of cultural difference. However, simply including units on multicultural education in teacher education courses is not sufficient – especially if ethnicity is constructed as something which pertains to 'others'. Many pre-service teacher education students come away from courses in which there is a multicultural component, believing that they have developed understandings of students' diverse cultural characteristics and are closer to finding ways of 'dealing' with 'these' students m in their classes. However, Australian student-teachers need to learn more than this – they need to recognise *their* privilege as members of white Anglo-Australian discourses and reflect on the ways in which these positionings shape their practices and their relationships. According to Ryan, Whiteness draws lines around the identities of others, but never inward towards itself. By drawing attention to others, it deflects attention away from itself' (1999, 87). Future teachers need to be able to recognise and interrogate oppressive discourses in general school practices and classroom practices, including curricula and unlike members of marginalised groups, it is comparatively easy members to

'overlook oppressive discourses because they are frequently the benefactors of such ways of making sense, and as a consequence, are not usually portrayed in unflattering or demeaning ways that would attract their attention' (1999, p.192). However, unless Australian teachers learn to become more reflective and able to identify the roles they inadvertently play in 'othering' processes, teachers of ethnic difference are likely to remain on the margins.

References

Bonnett, A. (1996) 'White Studies': the problems and projects of a new research agenda, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 13 (2), pp. 145-155.

Britzman, D. (1995) *Lost subjects, contested objects: toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning* (Albany, State University of New York Press).

Cochrane-Smith, M. (1995) Uncertain allies: understanding the boundaries of race and teaching, *Harvard Education Review*, 65 (4), pp. 541-569.

Department of Education, Victoria. (1997). *Multicultural Policy for Victorian Schools*, Melbourne: Department of Education

Fine, M. (1994) Dis-stance and other stances: Negotiations of power inside feminist research, in: A. Gitlin (Ed.) *Power and method: Political activism and educational research* (New York, Routledge).

Gillborn, D. (1996) Student roles and perspectives in antiracist education: a crisis of white ethnicity, *British Education Researcher Journal*, 22 (2), pp. 165-179.

Hage, G. (1998) *White nation: fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society* Annandale, Pluto Press

hooks, b. (1990) *Yearnings, race, gender and cultural politics* (Boston, Southend Press).

Jones, C., Maguire, M. & Watson, B. (1997) The school experience of some ethnic minority students in London schools during initial teacher training, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 23 (2), pp. 131-144.

Kamler, B., Reid, J. and N. Santoro (1999) Who's asking the questions? Researching race, ethnicity and teachers, *Australian Educational Researcher*, Vol. 26 (1) pp. 55-74.

Kamler, B., Santoro, N. and J. Reid (1998) *Cultural difference in the teaching profession: how much does it count?* Conference proceedings, Australian Association for research in Education Annual Conference, Adelaide, Australia, 29 November – 3 December.

Kumashiro, K. R. (1999) Supplementing normalcy and otherness: queer Asian American men reflect on stereotypes, identity, and oppression, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12 (5), pp. 491-508.

Mirza, S. (1996) Black educators, *Adults Learning*, 7 (6), pp. 136-137.

National Multicultural Advisory Council (1999) *Australian multiculturalism for a new century: towards inclusiveness*, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia.

Rakhit, B. (1998) Silenced voices: life history as an approach to the study of South Asian women teachers., In: P. Connolly, and B. Troyna *Researching racism in education* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, The Open University Press).

Richardson, L. (1992) The consequences of poetic representation, in: C. Ellis and M.G. Flaherty (Eds) *Investigating subjectivity: research on lived experience*, California, Sage.

Richardson, L. (1997) *Fields of play* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press).

Rizvi, F. (1997) Educational leadership and the politics of difference, *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 38 (1), pp. 91-102.

Santoro, N., Reid, J. and B. Kamler, (forthcoming) Making Difference Count : A Demographic Study of Overseas Born Teachers, *Australian Education Journal*.

Thomson, P. (1998) Narrative inquiry - A personal exploration, *Changing Education*, 4 (4), and 5 (1& 2), pp. 8-12.

Troyna B. and Rizvi, F. (1997) Racialisation of difference and the cultural politics of teaching, in: B.J. Biddle, T. Good and I. Goodson (Eds.) *International handbook of teachers and teaching*, Dordrecht, Kluwer.

Zimpher, N. and E. Ashburn, (1992). Countering Parochialism in Teacher Candidates. In M.E. Dilworth (ed), *Diversity in Teacher Education:* San Francisco, New Expectations.